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ABSTRACT

During the fourth quarter of a 1-year project to improve the transition of special needs learners in Texas from school to work, the following were accomplished: (1) the curriculum model was finalized and printed; (2) draft copies of six sample units were disseminated to field-test teachers, reviewed, and revised; (3) a draft copy of the implementation manual was written and disseminated to field-test teachers, reviewed, and revised; (3) a draft copy of the implementation manual was written and disseminated to project advisory committee members, and minor changes were made; (4) an implementation workshop for 20 teachers was held to disseminate materials and review evaluation procedures; (5) a half-day dissemination/implementation workshop was conducted for 21 vocational teachers and administrators; the workshop and the curriculum were evaluated very positively. No future activities for the curriculum project are planned. (Four appendixes, which make up three-fourths of the report, include the following: the transition skills model; the implementation manual outline; a list of transition curriculum topics; and workshop evaluation data.) (KC)

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TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK FOR SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

Jerry L. Wircenski, Project Director
University of North Texas

In Cooperation With
Texas Education Agency
Austin, Texas

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June 30, 1988

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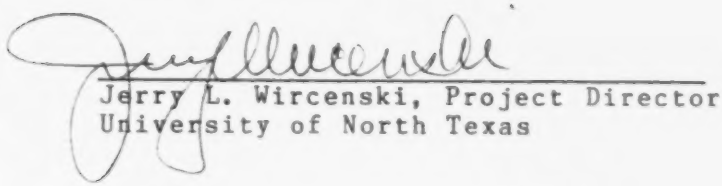
TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK
FOR SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS

Quarterly Report
for the period ended June 30, 1988

Submitted by:



Jerry L. Wircenski, Project Director
University of North Texas

TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK
FOR SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

June 30, 1988

MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

The accomplishments during the fourth quarter will center around each of the project's objectives.

Objective 1 - To develop a curriculum model for the school-to-work transition of special needs learners.

During the fourth quarter the final copy of the school to work transition model was designed and printed in conjunction with the Public Affairs Department at the University of North Texas. Type-setting has been completed and delivery was made in April.

Objective 2 - To develop curriculum materials, including visuals and student materials, to assist vocational personnel in teaching school to work transition skills.

Draft copies of six sample units were disseminated to the field-test teachers on April 12, 1988. Upon completion of the field-test activities each of the units were revised to incorporate the comments and concerns of the field-test teachers.

Objective 3 - Write an implementation manual to assist teachers with the process of implementing school to work transition skills in the classroom. The manual will include information related to transition planning for handicapped students.

A draft copy of the implementation manual was written and disseminated to the external reviewers and the TEA project advisory committee for review. Minor suggestions for improvement were made and incorporated.

Objective 4 - Conduct a field test review of materials developed in objectives 1, 2, and 3.

An implementation workshop for the twenty (20) teachers was held in Ft. Worth on April 12, 1988 from 12:00-3:00 PM. Field test copies were disseminated and evaluation procedures were reviewed.

Objective 5 - Provide materials for and conduct a half-day dissemination/implementation workshop for vocational teachers and administrators.

A dissemination workshop for the Special Needs Transition curriculum was held at 1:00 PM, June 17, 1988 in Austin. Of the 21 persons in attendance, 15 completed evaluation forms for the workshop. Representatives from the Texas Education Agency, Education Service Centers, and the University of North Texas were in attendance. Dr. Jerry Wircenski of the University of North Texas and Project Director directed the workshop. Mike Gentry, Project Research Assistant, presented the transition model and explained its components. Marti Barbieri, Project Curriculum Writer, presented the six weeks transition curriculum. She explained the development and successful field testing of the units in the Ft. Worth I.S.D. Ms. Barbieri emphasized that the curriculum was self contained and provided day to day activities. Examples of the curriculum were provided to those in attendance.

The workshop was evaluated on the following five criteria:

1. The project objectives were made clear.
2. The project procedures were clearly explained.
3. The advisory committee's participation in the project was described.
4. The project products were thoroughly discussed.
5. The products of the project were in a usable form for public schools.

Each item was given a rating from one to five. A score of five represented strong agreement with the evaluation statement and a score of one represented strong disagreement with the statement. The results of the evaluation revealed that the mean scores of each of the items reflected strong agreement with the statements. Each of the items received a mean score above 4.9. The transition project team had a strong interest in item #5 which reflected the usability of the product in the public schools. This item received a unanimous rating of 5. Item #2 also received a "5" rating to indicate the project procedures were clearly explained. Evaluators continued to express their approval of the curriculum with comments that included: "Great ideas...please continue producing products of this nature!" and "Materials - excellent quality...very professional." All the other evaluation items received mean rating of 4.93. The workshop activities concluded with a question/answer session and the completion of evaluation forms.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

None.

SUMMARY

Work progressed smoothly and ahead of schedule during the project.

Appendix A
Transition Skills Model

TEXAS TRANSITION

AWARENESS STAGE
K-6th GRADE

Objectives

Suggested Units of Instruction

Strategies

Community Resources Available

EXPLORATION STAGE
7th-10th GRADE

Transitional planning will help students examine the values high school or middle school years require for fulfillment of adult occupations.

The stage of transitional programming includes a continuation of classroom research and exploration. Field-based activities. An ongoing vocational evaluation should include diverse community exposure, interviews with school personnel and parents, as well as data from the classroom and exploration activities.

Objectives

During the exploration stage the goals of the program become three-fold:

To provide the student with a more realistic perception of the world of work and interpersonal living.

To allow the student to begin matching perceptual possibilities to his/her unique set of talents, abilities, needs and involvements, and

To teach skills needed for the job interview, completing an application form, employee responsibilities, etc., so a student may secure and retain meaningful employment.

Suggested Units of Instruction

Behavioral characteristics	Job applications
Being a wise consumer	Job interviews
Business contracts and agreements	Locating job openings
Career selection	Maintaining a residence
Community resources	Managing personal finances
Computation skills	Occupational knowledge/job tasks
Employee characteristics	Oral communication skills
Good citizenship practices	Personal health and safety
Information processing, problem-solving and decision-making skills	Reading skills
	Researching employers, products, services and personnel
	Writing skills

Strategies

Art Projects	Low-pace reading
Choral speaking	Models
Choice on assignment	Music
Debate	Partner reading
Demonstration	Part-time jobs
Dramatizations	Posters
Drills	Project Business
Essay reports	Reading and logic problems
Field trips	Reading and writing tasks
Films	Role playing
Games	Simulations
Guest speakers	Skits
Handouts	Team learning
Interview assignments	Warm-up activities
Job shadowing	Work centers
Lecture	Work study programs

Community Resources Available

Adopt a School Program

Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities

Big Brothers and Big Sisters

Chamber of Commerce

Council for Developmental Disabilities

Department of Human Resources

Foster Grandparents Program

Foundations for special groups including Epilepsy Foundation, Learning Disabled and Association for Retarded Citizens

Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation Family Counseling Unit (various locales)

President's Committee and Mayor's Committees on Employment of the Handicapped

Professional organizations

School vocational counselors

Service Corps of Retired Executives

Social security administration

Texas Employment Commission

Texas Rehabilitation Commission

PREPARATION STAGE
10th-12th GRADE

Objectives

Suggested Units of Instruction

Behavioral characteristics	Job applications
Being a wise consumer	Job interviews
Business contracts and agreements	Locating job openings
Career selection	Maintaining a residence
Community resources	Managing personal finances
Computation skills	Occupational knowledge/job tasks
Employee characteristics	Oral communication skills
Good citizenship practices	Personal health and safety
Information processing, problem-solving and decision-making skills	Reading skills
	Researching employers, products, services and personnel
	Writing skills

Strategies

Art projects	Information sheets
Class discussions	Interest inventories and questionnaires
Cooperative games	Job assignments
Demonstrations	Job sheets
Essays and research reports	Leadership conferences
Field trips	Lecture
Films and tapes	Models and mock-ups
Group project work	Panel discussions
Guest speakers	Reading and writing assignments
Guided practice	Role play
Illustrations, posters, etc.	Simulations
Individual counseling	Student presentations

Community Resources Available

Adopt a School Program

Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities

Big Brothers and Big Sisters

Chamber of Commerce

Council for Developmental Disabilities

Department of Human Resources

Foster Grandparents Program

Foundations for special groups including Epilepsy Foundation, Learning Disabled and Association for Retarded Citizens

Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation Family Counseling Unit (various locales)

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Professional organizations

School vocational counselors

Service Corps of Retired Executives

Social security administration

Texas Employment Commission

Texas Rehabilitation Commission

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE
CONTINUING EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT

The goal of transitional planning is a natural flow from school to work and continuous living. Participation in an individual's previous exploring transitional planning should improve a student's opportunity to gain successful and rewarding employment and to become a contributing member of society as a result of independent meeting his/her options personally.

At this stage, career skills are critically important because educational options and support services begin to narrow significantly. For those students who have not successfully developed the skills necessary for competitive employment, three options remain: limited support, partial support and full support. Perhaps the most important skill area at this stage is the ability to access community resources because this will be the key source for acquiring training and/or assistance in all other areas.

Objectives

During this stage the student arrives at the conclusion of his/her transition from school to work. To complete this transition, the student should:

Gain successful vocational employment;

Possess the skills to access information, resources and

Make his/her place as a contributing member of the community.

Suggested Units of Instruction

Behavioral characteristics	Job applications
Being a wise consumer	Job interviews
Business contracts and agreements	Locating job openings
Career selection	Maintaining a residence
Community resources	Managing personal finances
Computation skills	Occupational knowledge/job tasks
Employee characteristics	Oral communication skills
Good citizenship practices	Personal health and safety
Information processing, problem-solving and decision-making skills	Reading skills
	Researching employers, products, services and personnel
	Writing skills

Resources Available for Limited Support

Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities

Closer Look (Learning Disabled Parents)

Community Colleges

Mainstream Project Link

Private career counselors

Private employment services

Salvation Army

Texas Employment Commission

Texas Rehabilitation Commission

YMCA/YWCA

Resources Available for Partial Support

Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities

Association on Handicapped Student Service Programs in Post-Secondary Education

Closer Look (Learning Disabled Parents)

Goodwill Industries

Job Training Partnership Act

Mainstream Project Link

Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation

Salvation Army

Texas Rehabilitation Commission

Resources Available for Full Support

Developmental Disabilities

Group home residences (placement of persons with parents)

Halfway houses

Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation

Sheltered Employment Facilities (Workshops)

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Appendix B
Implementation Manual Outline

TEXAS TRANSITION MODEL

IMPLEMENTATION MANUAL

UNIVERSITY
OF NORTH TEXAS

Developed through a grant from the Texas Education Agency

THE TEXAS TRANSITION MODEL

The Texas Transition Model graphically illustrates the special needs learner's - disadvantaged, handicapped, and limited-English proficient, expected development of vocational skills as they progress from kindergarten through 12th grade and assume a role in the workforce. Transition is defined as:

> "the movement from one state, stage or place to another, as from school to work and community living."

Transition should enhance economic and social independence upon graduation from secondary school. The transition process should allow the student to pass from a state of dependency to independence. During the years in school, learners are largely dependent upon parents for financial support, housing, food, discipline, and social behavior. They are also dependent upon the school for education, an orderly environment, discipline, and a social structure which models acceptable behavior patterns.

The home and school environments somewhat protect them from adulthood demands. Because no immediate need satisfies these demands, learners often finish public school without developing the skills and attitudes necessary to secure and keep employment, secure and maintain a residence, or develop positive social relationships. Therefore, need for a plan to provide this transition for the special needs learner is evident.

The Texas Transition Model, condenses a transition plan for special needs learners in grades K through 12. The plan is designed to provide a set of learning experiences that will affect the awareness, understanding, and behaviors necessary for the transition from school to work. The model is not intended to be a rigid formula to be used exactly the same in every school or with every student. It is intended to be a flexible framework adaptable to the individual differences of the student, school, program, and community. The model is divided into four stages of transition:

1. The Awareness Stage: grades K through 6
2. The Exploration Stage: grades 7 through 10
3. The Preparation Stage: grades 10 through 12
4. The Implementation Stage: continuing education/employment

The Awareness, Exploration, and Preparation stages in the model include the following sections: Introduction, Objectives, Units of Instruction, Strategy, and Resources. Each begins with an Introduction which defines the stage and indicates the scope of activities included in that stage. The next section of the model states the Objectives in very broad terms; however, they are divided into more specific topics later in this guide. The objectives describe the kinds of behaviors which should be evident in a student at the end of the stage.

The list of Units of Instruction is designed to help the educator or administrator reach the objectives by identifying major areas of study to include in that stage. The Strategy section in each stage is a list of suggested methods and activities to use when teaching these units of instruction. Teaching strategies are only limited by imagination, but those suggestions are some that have proven effective in those particular units.

The final section, Resources will prove helpful to the educator who wishes to seek additional information, materials, speakers or personal assistance when implementing a transition plan. These suggested resources represent government and private organizations that are dedicated to the same or similar goals of this transition plan. The Resources section is expanded in the implementation stage.

The next sections of this guide overview the components of the transition model. Each section guides the reader through the steps of the model.

AWARENESS STAGE

Introduction - The foundation of transition skills is laid first in the elementary grades. The focus of this stage is awareness of occupations and responsibilities in adult life. This awareness will often serve as a basis for relationships. For example, children are familiar with postal carriers, their uniforms, and duties. The person that delivers mail to them may become known as "Mr. Postman" or the "mail lady" instead of "that man" or "that lady." The awareness of the postal worker enables them to include the existence of the postal worker in their society and to consider a postal worker as a potential career. This is especially true when confronted with the question "What do you want to do when you grow up?" The response will depend largely upon their familiarity with the career as well as a "role model" relationship with someone in that career. The same would be true of a police officer, carpenter, etc.

Objectives - The objective of the awareness stage is to inform students of career options and responsibilities of adult life. This objective is reached most effectively by addressing three broad areas. The first area is a knowledge base, a set of facts concerning a broad selection of careers to which an elementary student could relate. (Example: construction worker rather than city engineer.) Next, the development of attitudes will lay the foundation for a sound work ethic and socialization skills. Finally, as students gain self understanding, they can consider career choices in terms of their own likes, dislikes, etc. (See Appendix A for a complete list of transition skills.)

The Units of Instruction blend basic academic skills with personal development. The personal development units concentrate on attitudes, management of personal resources, and decision making/problem solving skills.

The Strategies listed in the model resulted from many visits with Texas elementary school teachers. These strategies are the ones which have proven effective for this level of instruction. In addition, much of the curriculum in the Awareness Stage is easily integrated into regular academic units. For example, if a teacher is teaching subtraction skills, word problems can be included to apply the skill in a career setting. The teacher can point out how certain occupations such as carpenters depend on those skills and expand on that occupation.

The Resources listed in each stage are self explanatory. One suggestion for using the resource organizations in the Awareness Stage is to use a series of guest speakers representing a variety of occupations. This should provide a positive introduction to career areas.

EXPLORATION STAGE

Introduction - Students in the Exploration Stage prepare to make a quality decision concerning an occupation using individual research, "hands on" activities, and assessment results. These activities are necessary for students who may identify a career goal before entering the Preparation Stage.

Objectives - As the model indicates, the program has three goals in the Exploration Stage:

1. To provide students a more realistic perception of the world of work and independent living

2. To allow students a means for matching occupation possibilities to their unique set of interests, abilities, needs, and involvements

3. To teach pre-vocational training skills such as interviewing for jobs, filling out application forms, fulfilling employee responsibilities, etc., so students may secure and keep entry level employment.

A combination of on-going assessment, classroom research, and exploration (hands-on) enables students to reach these goals. These three types of activities help students identify career goals and options and provide input for a plan that will prepare them for career choices. This preparation plan is the basis for the program option selected in the Preparation Stage in grades 10 through 12. On-going assessment during the Exploration Stage will provide invaluable input to the students and teachers that may well be the basis for a career goal selection. Assessment should include interest surveys, aptitude tests, and interviews with school counselors. Initial assessment will help the student consider interest aptitude and other trials when selecting career possibilities. (1) Knowing their interests and aptitudes should help students select a career area for research assignments. (2) For example, a student may enjoy working with carpentry tools and helping a parent in a carpentry workshop. If the assessment also shows an aptitude for carpentry, the student will likely choose to investigate that area. As the student progresses through the Exploration Stage, on-going assessments will monitor changes in interests, aptitudes, and abilities. A cumulative assessment should be given at the end of the Exploration Stage before students enter the Preparation Stage.

The Units of Instruction expand their scope in the Exploration Stage to include more specific research, hands-on learning, and pre-vocational units such as job interviewing and completing job applications. The pre-vocational units are especially important for those students who plan to enter a cooperative vocational program in the Preparation Stage, since these programs use certain entry level skills at the beginning of the program. (See Appendix A for a complete list of transition skills.)

Strategies - Much of the exploration of occupational options will be accomplished through classroom activities. As in the elementary years, some transition skills will be addressed by integrating the objectives into the basic academic units. A much larger number of the objectives, however, will be taught in lessons that address only the transition skills objectives. The curriculum may include entry level skills, generalizable skills, life-centered occupational skills, and basic academic skills.

The strategies in the Exploration Stage have been expanded to include "experiential" approaches such as simulation, job shadowing, and part-time employment. Experiential exploration will often use employers and/or community resources as part of a planned series of activities that let students observe or perform jobs to gain a variety of experience in different jobs. These experiences can provide important information gained only through hands-on involvement. The experiences will strongly influence a student's decisions concerning vocational preferences as well as develop self-esteem and self-confidence.

Community Resources - As in the Awareness Stage, these agencies and groups can be an excellent source for speakers. Also note that the school vocational counselor is included in this list. The counselor is important during the Exploration Stage as a service person, for vocational assessments, and for input as part of a coordinating "team." This "team" should also include the teacher, parents, business and community leaders and students (where appropriate).

PREPARATION STAGE

Introduction - Ideally, students should have identified a career goal upon entering the Preparation Stage. Therefore, the training students receive during this stage is more specific and prepares them for either immediate job entry into that career area or for advanced training. Notice that this stage also includes the 10th grade. The overlap accomodates students who:

1. Are behind in grade level.
2. Are pursuing training that requires three years of preparation.
3. Need three years for preparation because of learning style.
4. Are economically disadvantaged and need an income supplement.

Objectives - Vocational programs offered in grades 10 through 12 are the most viable option for transition training in the Preparation Stage since they teach the skills and attitudes for which most employers are looking. Two types of vocational programs are available in this stage--pre-employment and cooperative. Both of these programs address the three skill areas: technical skills, employee skills, and independent living skills. The technical skills are taught either on the job (in a cooperative program) or in the lab/shop (in a pre-employment program), while the employee and independent living skills are generally taught in the classroom.

Units of Instruction - Job specific technical skills are vitally important in the Preparation Stage. These units will vary according to the career objective and vocational program in which students enroll. Many vocational programs can be modified to bring students to a desired level of preparation. For example, if students in auto mechanics class do not have the desire or ability to become a full service mechanic, they may elect to specialize in brake and hydraulic systems by concentrating on just those competencies. This would prepare them for immediate job placement and/or advanced training following high school. The other units of instruction listed on the model address employee skills and independent living skills. (See Appendix A for a complete list of transition skills.)

Strategies - The list of strategies in the Preparation Stage will keep the instructional program fresh, informative, entertaining and innovative. Note that some strategies are specifically designed for technical skills units, such as mock-ups and job sheets.

Community Resources - The list of resources becomes even more important in the Preparation Stage. Not only will these organizations or agencies provide input as guest speakers and counselors, but also many can provide contacts for part-time student employment during cooperative training or full-time employment after graduation.

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

Introduction - During the Implementation Stage, the student actually moves from secondary school to work and independent living. Any skills necessary for employment and independent living that have not been learned must be addressed now. For students still needing transition training, three options remain. They are:

1. Limited support.

2. Partial support.

3. Full support.

Objectives - Students have completed the transition from school to work when certain objectives have been met. Not only should the student find full time employment, but also employment should prove to be successful and continual. Even if companies go out of business, lay off workers, terminate workers, or move to another city, students should still possess the skills to find and secure new employment. Students should be contributing members of the community. They should be able to maintain a dwelling, develop positive social relationships, and demonstrate economic responsibility. A critical skill area in the Implementation Stage is the ability to access community resources. These government and community organizations provide additional training or support to students with deficit skills.

Units of Instruction - The list of the Units of Instruction in the Implementation Stage is similar to the list in the Preparation Stage. Students may need to continue or review technical skill units. Some students may need to strengthen certain areas where skills are weak. Still others may have altogether missed some of the units of instruction from previous stages. (See Appendix A for a complete list of transition skills.)

Community Resources - Those students still requiring suppport are classified into three groups (limited, partial, and full). To serve each of these groups, a careful review of community resources in the Implementation Stage provided three listings. Each resource was selected on the basis of its appropriateness and type of support. On the model, those three listings are identified as:

1. Resources Available for Limited Support.

2. Resources Available for Partial Support.

3. Resources Available for Full Support.

SUMMARY

The Texas Transition Model identifies four stages of growth in which special needs learners move from school to work. During this time, the students develop a desired level of independence to live and work successfully on their own as productive members of their community. An outline of the transition process by stages is:

I. Awareness Stage - Students are introduced to occupations aroun them and responsibilities of adult life. Students develop elementary basic skills (reading, writing, math).

II. Exploration Stage - Students identify a career goal during this stage. They investigate occupations that appeal to them and experience activities included in those fields. On-going assessment records changes in career interests. Students develop pre-employment skills such as interviewing skills, completing an application form, etc. Basic skills are reinforced and developed.

III. Preparation Stage - Students learn technical skills for their identified career goal. In addition, job skills (employee relationships, communication, and independent living skills) are taught in the vocational classroom. Basic skills are reinforced and developed.

IV. Implementation Stage - The student enters immediate job placement or advanced training. Deficit skills are addressed through appropriate government and community organizations.

The flexibility of this model allows students freedom to pursue career goals and realize desired levels of independent living. Students are supported through each of these stages by parents, teachers, counselors, and local business and community resources. The overriding goal of the Texas Transition Model is to combine planning and support for a higher success rate for all of the special needs students in Texas.

Appendix C
Transition Curriculum Topics

TRANSITION CURRICULUM TOPICS

TOPIC 1: CHECKING

TOPIC 2: MAP SKILLS

TOPIC 3: DECISION MAKING

TOPIC 4: BILL READING AND PAYING

TOPIC 5: APARTMENT RENTAL

Appendix D
Workshop Evaluation Data

SUMMARY OF SCORES FROM
DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORMS FOR
SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSITION SKILLS PROJECT

The following evaluation items were rated on a scale from one to five. A score of five represents strong agreement with the statement and a score of one represents strong disagreement with the statement.

1. The project objectives were made clear.

	1	2	3	4	5
Frequency	0	0	0	1	14
Percent	0	0	0	7	93
Missing data	None				
Mean:	4.93				

2. The project procedures were clearly explained.

	1	2	3	4	5
Frequency	0	0	0	0	15
Percent	0	0	0	0	100
Missing data	None				
Mean:	5.0				

3. The advisory committee's participation in the project was described.

	1	2	3	4	5
Frequency	0	0	0	1	14
Percent	0	0	0	7	93
Missing data	None				
Mean:	4.93				

4. The projects products were thoroughly discussed.

	1	2	3	4	5
Frequency	0	0	0	1	14
Percent	0	0	0	7	93
Missing data	None				
Mean:	4.93				

		1	2	3	4	5
5. The products of the project are in a usable form for public schools.	Frequency	0	0	0	0	15
	Percent	0	0	0	0	100
	Missing data	None				
	Mean:	5.0				

COMMENTS:

1. Great ideas and student materials; please continue producing products of this nature. Thanks! Thanks! Thanks!

2. Materials - excellent quality and functional.
   Production quality - very professional!!

3. Excellent program.